

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 3644

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT GR

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH GEORGE MAVROS

1. GEORGE MAVROS, AS WE HAVE POINTED OUT IN OTHER REPORTING, SEEMS ALWAYS TO BE THE WRONG MAN FOR THE SEASON AND HIS CLOSET CONTINUES TO ACCUMULATE CONSOLATION PRIZES (ATHESN 6922 OF 9/23/74). EVEN TODAY, AS LEADER OF THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, MAVROS AND HIS CU/NF PARTY -- A CENTER-LEFT ASEMBLAGE-- HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO MAKE MUCH OF A DENT IN THE GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT GREECE'S POLITICAL LIFE IS BASICALLY DOMINATED BY ONE PARTY (NEW DEMOCRACY) AND ONE MAN (CARAMANLIS).

2. I HAD A LONG PRIVATE LUNCH YESTERDAY WITH MAVROS FOR A TOUR D'HORIZON. I FOUND THAT HIS HORIZON -- AS LEAST AS FAR AS THIS CONVERSATION WAS CONCERNED -- WAS DOMINATED BY TWO SUBJECTS: PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES AND CYPRUS. HE WAS SOMEWHAT MORE CHOERENT BUT OBVIOUSLY NOT NEARLY SO WELL INFORMED AS WHEN HE WAS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER BEFORE THE ELCTIONS. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES THE HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT HE SAID.

3. A. CYPRUS: MAVROS SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT MUCH FROM THE BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL MEETING IN ROME THIS WEEKEND. HE SAID THAT THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT WAS SO WEAKLY BASED AND SO

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SUBJECT TO ATTACK AND CRITICISM BY ECEVIT AND THE TURKISH

MILITARY THAT IT WOULD BE UNABLE TO OFFER CUH IN THE WAY OF CONCESSIONS THAT COULD LEAD TO A RAPIDLY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ON CYPRUS. EVEN SO, MAVROS SAID, THERE WILL BE SO MUCH INTENSE DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS--NOT ONLY IN ROME BUT ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO ANKARA NEXT WEEK AND, LATER, AT THE NATO SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS AND THE SECOND ROUND OF THE VIENNA TALKS -- THAT HE BELIEVED THAT MAIN OUTLINES FOR A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT COULD EMERGE. IN ANY CASE, THE TRUE POSITIONS OF ALL THE INTERESTED PARTIES COULD BE FULLY PLUMBED, AND A VALID ASSESSMENT MADE OF WHETHER A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE WOULD BE POSSIBLE.

B. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONING MAVROS SAID THAT HE WAS IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS AND HE WAS CONVINCED THAT MAKARIOS "WOULD NOT BLOCK" A SETTLEMENT. WHAT, I ASKED, IF AS SEEMED LIKELY, THE TURKS WOULD BE UNWILLING TO ACCEPT MAKARIOS AS PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS? MAVROS SAID THAT MAKARIOS HAD ALREADY MADE UP HIS MIND TO RESIGN. MAKARIOS KNOWS THAT HE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE TURKS AS PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS, MAVROS, SAID, BUT THAT IS REALLY NOT THE IMPORTANT QUESTION. THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS WHETHER MAKARIOS CAN BE PREVAILED UPON TO ENDORSE A SETTLEMENT. IF NOT, THERE WILL CONTINUE TO BE PROBLEMS ON CYPRUS. MAVROS SAID THAT MAKARIOS WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT A BIZONAL SETTLEMENT IF REPEAT IF OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE SETTLEMENT WERE ACCEPTABLE. MAVROS THOUGHT THAT MAKARIOS WOULD NOT REVEAL HIS INTENTIONS CONCERNING HIS FUTURE AS PRESIDENT OF CYPRUS OR HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD A FINAL SETTLEMENT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE. MAVROS DID NOT EXCLUDE MAKARIOS RESIGNING AS PRESIDENT SO AS NOT TO BLOCK A SETTLEMENT BUT WALKING OUT AND DISAVOWING THE SETTLEMENT AT THE VERY END.

C. THE ONLY OTHER SIGNIFICANT COMMENT MAVROS MADE ON CYPRUS WAS IN THE FORM OF A SIDELIGHT ON DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF'S CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH CARAMANLIS. MAVROS SAID THAT AVEROFF HAD ALWAYS BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN PLANNING THE STRATEGY FOR THE CYPRUS NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, FOR THE FIRST TIME, WHEN MAKARIOS CAME TO ATHENS LAST WEEK FOR A "SUMMIT" MEETING WITH TOP GOG OFFICIALS ON CYPRUS, CARAMANLIS AND BITSIOS WERE THERE BUT INSTEAD OF AVEROFF, THE OTHER KEY GREEK OFFICIAL PRESENT WAS MINISTER TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PRIME MINISTER GEORGE RALLIS. MAVROS SAID THAT MAKARIOS NOTICED AVEROFF'S ABSENCE AND INQUIRED OF CARAMANLIS ABOUT IT, AND THAT CARAMANLIS MADE SOME OFFHAND COMMENT ABOUT AVEROFF NOT BEING AVAILABLE AT THE MOMENT. MAVROS SAID THAT HE AND MAKARIOS DID NOT ACCEPT CARAMANLIS' EXPLANATION AT FACE VALUE AND WONDERED WHETHER SOME KIND OF ANIMUS WAS DEVELOPING BETWEEN THE TWO MEN.

4. PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY: MAVROS SAID THAT THE PARLIAMENT WAS IN THE FINAL STAGES OF ITS DEBATE ON THE CONSTITUTION AND HE EXPLAINED WHY HIS PARTY HAD ABSTAINED ON THE VOTE OF SEVERAL ARTICLES IN THE CONSTITUTION EARLIER THIS WEEK (ATHENS 3570). MAVROS SAID HE FRANKLY DID NOT AGREE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON ARTICLE 5 CONCERNING DEPORTATION AND WHEN HE AND SOME OF HIS SUPPORTERS LED THE DEBATE TO GET THAT ARTICLE AMENDED, CARAMANLIS HEARD ABOUT IT AND BECAME INSENSITIVE. MAVROS SAID THAT CARAMANLIS HAD A TENDENCY TO TAKE SUCH THINGS PERSONALLY AND HAD GIVEN HIM (MAVROS) A HARD TIME BECAUSE THE CU/NF DEPUTIES WERE IMPEDING THE RAPID CONSIDERATION AND PASSAGE OF THE CONSTITUTION THE WAY THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT HAD PRESENTED IT TO THE PARLIAMENT. MAVROS INDICATED THAT HIS OWN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CARAMANLIS WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM AND THAT HE WANTED TO REMAIN ON GOOD TERMS -- AS HE BELIEVED HE WAS GENERALLY SPEAKING--BUT THAT HE WAS UNWILLING TO SACRIFICE HIS POLITICAL BELIEFS MERELY TO RETAIN CARAMANLIS, GOOD WILL.

B. MAVROS SAID THAT CARAMANLIS HAD ASKED HIM TO COOPERATE IN HOLDING UP THE DEBATE ON THE "PRESIDENTIAL POWERS" TO BE ACCORDED BY THE CONSTITUTION UNTIL THE END OF NEXT WEEK, AND MAVROS SAID HE AGREED. MAVROS SAID THIS WOULD BE THE LAST SUBJECT TO BE DEBATED AND THAT HE FELT PARLIAMENTARY CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION WOULD BE CONCLUDED IN ANOTHER 10 DAYS OR SO. MAVROS OPINED THAT CARAMANLIS WANTED TO HOLD UP THE DEBATE ON THE QUESTION OF PRESIDENTIAL POWERS BECAUSE HE (CARAMANLIS) HAD NOT MADE UP HIS OWN MIND ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT TO SEEK THE PRESIDENCY.

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LIMDIS

C. MAVROS WENT ON TO SAY THAT FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF THE CONSTITUTION HE EXPECTED THE PARLIAMENT TO VOTE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION, AND ELECT A NEW PRESIDENT OF GREECE IN THE EARLY DAYS OF JUNE, FOLLOWING WHICH THE PARLIAMENT WOULD RECESS FOR APPROXIMATELY 3 MONTHS. MAVROS SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY EXPECTS CARAMANLIS TO OPT FOR THE SO-CALLED "MIDDLE SOLUTION" AS FAR AS THE PRESIDENCY WAS CONCERNED, THAT IS, NEITHER SEEKING THE PRESIDENCY NOW NOR COMMITTING HIMSELF TO REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD. THE " MIDDLE SOLUTION", HE SAID, WAS TO ARRANGE FOR A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF CARAMANLIS, ONE WHO WOULD BE BEHOLDEN TO HIM, TO BE ELECTED PRESIDENT FOR 1-2 YEARS, ALLOWING CARAMANLIS TO RETAIN THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP UNTIL HIS PROGRAM OF GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN FULLY SET IN PLACE. IF CARAMANLIS WERE TO ACCEPT THE PRESIDENCY NOW, MAVROS SAID, THE NEW DEMOCRACY PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY-- AND PERHAPS THE NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY ITSELF-- WOULD DISINTEGRATE. CARAMANLIS, UNDER THIS PLAN, WOULD PRE-ARRANGE THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT WOULD AGREE TO RESIGN 1-2 YEARS FROM NOW AND ALLOW CARAMANLIS TO ASSUME THE PRESIDENCY AT THAT TIME FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM.

5. MAVROS, IN CAREFULLY PHRASED BUT SOMEWHAT CUTTING REMARKS, SAID HE WAS A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT CARAMANLIS AND HIS PERFORMANCE. HE SAID HE WAS AFRAID THAT CARAMANLIS "HAD LOST HIS DRIVE", THAT HE NOTICED CARAMANLIS SEEMED
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SUBJECT TO AN UNUSUAL NUMBER OF "UPS AND DOWNS", THAT CARAMANLIS HAD BEEN "CUTTING DOWN" ON HIS WORK AND OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES, AND THAT CARAMANLIS " TIRES EASILY" AND DOES NOT SEEM TO BE "SLEEPING WELL". (COMMENT: WHILE ALL OF MAVROS'S OBSERVATIONS MAY BE TRUE, I THINK ONE HAS TO CONSIDER THE SOURCE. IN MY OWN PERSONAL OBSERVATION, CARAMANLIS HAS CONTINUED TO BE VIGOROUS AND EFFECTIVE IN THE DISCHARGE OF HIS DUTIES.)

6. MAVROS AND I ALSO HAD BRIEF EXCHANGES ON US-GREEK RELATIONS, GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND, SOME OTHER POINTS OF CURRENT INTEREST TO HIM AND ME. HOWEVER, NOTHING, REALLY NEW OR TERRIBLY SIGNIFICANT CAME FROM THIS DISCUSSION OTHER THAN THAT REPORTED ABOVE.
KUBISCH

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